



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Rising Tide of Dementia Demands Funded Action Plan for B.C. Families**

**Vancouver, B.C.** – The Alzheimer Society of B.C. and B.C. resident Jim Mann officially launch *Jim's Push for a Plan* at the Society's Vancouver Resource Centre today to win a comprehensive, funded dementia action plan for the 70,000 British Columbians who live with dementia. With 15,000 new cases each year, the rising tide of dementia is set to become a crisis within the term of B.C.'s next Premier.

Jim Mann was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2007. He will tour B.C. to share his vision for a plan to help people with future diagnoses as they journey through dementia. "I want to see a dementia action plan that prioritizes early diagnosis, support to enable family caregivers to sustain home care and health-care provider education. I want a plan that connects everyone who faces a diagnosis of dementia and their caregivers to the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s First Link<sup>®</sup> program," says Mann.

In the lead up to the B.C. election in May, Mann will visit communities across the province to share his story and urge the many B.C. families who are impacted by dementia to speak with their local MLAs.

The Society and Jim Mann seek action from the next B.C. government to develop and implement a comprehensive, funded dementia action plan that includes:

- **Support for family caregivers**, including financial incentives, expanded and improved home support programs, and access to appropriate care when and where it is needed for the person with dementia.
- **Policies and programs that support early diagnosis and intervention** to help reduce overall health-care costs and improve patient and family outcomes.
- **Tools for health-care providers** so they can give the best care possible, such as continuing on-the-job training.
- **Access to the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s First Link program** for all British Columbians who need it (the program is currently unavailable in most B.C. communities).
- **Ongoing evaluation to track progress.**

By 2038, there will be more than 177,000 people living with dementia in B.C. with family caregivers providing an estimated 118.7 million hours of unpaid care per year. Within 30 years, the associated economic burden of dementia in our province is projected to reach a cumulative total of \$130.2 billion.

“Dementia will have a devastating impact on our province’s families and finances if we do not take a long-term view,” says Alzheimer Society of B.C. CEO Jean Blake. “But a shared vision for care and a comprehensive, funded dementia action plan will create a system that supports people living with dementia and their families so they can lead full, dignified lives.”

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### **About Dementia**

Dementia is a term that describes a general group of brain disorders. Symptoms include the loss of memory, impaired judgment, and changes in behaviour and personality. Dementia is progressive, degenerative and eventually terminal. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia accounting for almost two-thirds of dementias in Canada today.

### **About the Alzheimer Society of B.C.**

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides a province-wide network of support and education and information resources for families impacted by dementia. The Society is a non-profit organization that also advocates for better dementia health care and raises money to fund research. Learn more at [www.alzheimerbc.org](http://www.alzheimerbc.org).

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